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FM AMEMBASSY DHAKA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3904  
INFO RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 9053  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 7892  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1615  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 9856  
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DHAKA 000681

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/24/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [BG](#)  
SUBJECT: SEDITION CASE CONTINUES TO TWIST IN THE WIND

REF: DHAKA 550

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Geeta Pasi; reason 1.4(d)

11. (C) The sedition trial of Bangladeshi journalist Salahuddin Shoaib Choudhury will likely be postponed again, at least until May, because of an outstanding dismissal petition his lawyers have filed with the High Court Appellate Division. Choudhury recently told POLOFF that his lawyer, Barrister Samarendra Goswami, filed another postponement petition with the trial court judge on April 23, the current trial start date.

DR. HOSSAIN \*NOT\* INVOLVED  
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12. (C) Shoaib said he contacted Barrister Dr. Kemal Hossain at the recommendation of former Canadian Justice Minister Irvine Cutler. Hossain was "extremely occupied with other issues," and not able to provide assistance. This contradicts Shoaib's earlier statements that he had already entered into discussions with Dr. Hossain regarding his case. (REFTEL)

13. (C) When POLOFF spoke to Dr. Hossain recently, he did not seem at all familiar with the case. Eventually he said he thought the charges against "that journalist" had been dropped a few years ago. Hossain also said Culter -- an old friend -- had not mentioned the case to him. He suggested his daughter and law partner Barrister Sara Hossain might have some involvement in the case. Sara Hossain said she had been contacted over a year ago about the case, but the firm did not agree to represent Shoaib.

BANGLADESH AMBASSADOR TO U.S. APOLOGIZES...SORT OF  
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14. (C) Meanwhile, Bangladesh Ambassador to the U.S. Shamsher Chowdhury wrote Shoaib's main U.S. benefactor, freelance journalist Dr. Richard Benkin ([www.interfaithstrength.com](http://www.interfaithstrength.com)) on April 15 to apologize for the Bangladesh government's treatment of Shoaib. He also forwarded Benkin a copy of the April 15 New York Times editorial "Bangladesh in the Generals' Grip." Shamsher claimed he was now under "tremendous questioning" by the caretaker government for having promised to give bail to Shoaib and for making assurances the charges against Shoaib would be dropped.

15. (C) Shamsher said he was retiring and returning to Bangladesh next week but, "if the pressure gets too much, I may have to leave the country (Bangladesh)." He said he was "furious" at the Bangladesh Nationalist Party for not keeping their word to drop the charges against Shoaib, but now his own situation was "far more serious" than Shoaib's. He asked Benkin to keep him in his prayers.

POST CONTINUES TO MONITOR CASE  
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16. (SBU) Post speaks to Shoaib regularly, and will continue to monitor the sedition case against him.  
BUTENIS